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See pages 78-9

PIONEERS OF BIRTH CONTROL

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PIONEERS OF BIRTH CONTROL

IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

BY

VICTOR ROBINSON, PH.C., M.D.

Author of Pathfinders in Medicine, The Don Quixote of Psychiatry, etc.
Formerly Editor of the Medical Review of Reviews.

1919

VOLUNTARY PARENTHOOD LEAGUE

206 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

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Miserable it is
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
Into this cursed world a woeful race;
in thy power
It lies, yet ere *conception to prevent*
The race unblessed, to being yet unbegot.

John Milton: *Paradise Lost*, book x

Reading 2-18-46

To

MARIE C. STOPES, Sc.D., PH.D., F.L.S.

WHOSE GOSPEL OF MARRIED LOVE
BLENDED WITH VOLUNTARY PARENTHOOD
WOULD HEAL THE BROKEN HEART OF MANKIND,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

It is important to observe that Holland, the country which takes most care that children shall be well and voluntarily conceived, has increased its survival-rate and has thereby not diminished but increased its population, and has the lowest infant mortality in Europe. While in America, where the outrageous Comstock Laws confuse wise scientific prevention with illegal abortion and label them both as obscene, thus preventing people from obtaining decent hygienic knowledge, horrible and criminal abortion is more frequent than in any other country.—DR. STOPES.

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PIONEERS OF BIRTH CONTROL

PIONEERS OF BIRTH CONTROL

I

FROM MALTHUS TO MILL

I am not an enemy to population; I am an enemy to vice and misery; and the reason why I desire that no more children should be born than the condition of the country can support is this, that of those that are born the greatest possible number may live.

MALTHUS.

Thomas Hardy wrote "Life's Little Ironies," but Destiny concocted a greater irony when she made Thomas Robert Malthus the unwilling father of the birth-control movement. This clergyman was

a timid bird in the sociological aviary, and he turned in despair from the daring eagles he hatched. Malthus was not a Malthusian, but despite his repudiation, the birth-control agitation emanates from him and bears his name. As Malthus was not born in a log-cabin, but in the lap of comfort; as his father was not a hard-headed farmer, but a man of culture who appreciated his son; and as the boy was not sent to a boarding-school where he finally licked the class-bully, but was educated at home by private tutors, it may excite surprise that he achieved eminence: according to the traditions, genius has a different history.

Father and son passed many pleasant hours together in friendly debate. The elder Malthus was a correspondent of Rousseau, and a follower of Condorcet and Godwin, echoing their belief in the perfectibility of society, but the son ar-

gued that "the realization of a happy society will always be hindered by the miseries consequent on the tendency of population to increase faster than the means of subsistence."

Impressed with these views the father asked the son to write them out, and when he saw the manuscript he urged that it be published. As a result of this encouragement, in 1798 appeared the first edition of an "Essay on the Principles of Population." A year previous, Malthus had taken charge of a small parish in Surrey, where he expected to lead the undisturbed and uneventful life of an English pastor. But fame came with his book, and he studied deeper to see whether he was right, and traveled abroad, everywhere acquiring information that substantiated his discovery of the law of population. Whether the doctrine of Malthus is mathematically correct, or scientifically tenable from the

viewpoint of modern political economy, matters comparatively little—of real importance is the impetus his "Essay" gave to the study of the population problem.

The ink that lay in Malthus' horn produced a revolution in political economy. Praise and obloquy were showered upon the author in profusion, for supporters and opponents began a controversy which is still mooted. The "much-misrepresented Malthus" possessed a character of unusual nobility. Unswayed by the adulation, and untouched by the abuse, he quietly kept on revising successive editions of his epoch-making book.

Malthus was a keen diagnostician; with clarity he saw the evils of an excessive and uncontrolled birth-rate, but as a therapeutist he was a clergyman. For a serious disease he proposed an impossible remedy. Perhaps in Malthus' day not much was known of sexual pathology;

perhaps he knew little of the effects of sex repression; perhaps it is a clergyman's privilege to avoid looking at facts if they conflict with his moral precepts—so he tried to solve the sphinx-riddle of reproduction by advising celibacy and late marriages. There was only one weak link in Malthus' chain of reasoning—he forgot human nature, and therefore placidly urged human beings to abstain from sexual intercourse during the years when the sexual instinct is most imperative.

According to Malthus, only when time had cooled the passions and partial impotence supervened, should man and woman repair to the altar. He looked upon the lusty bridegroom and the blushing young bride as a menace to society—his ideal was the decorous middle-aged couple content with Platonic relations. It is to the eternal merit of Malthus that he opened up a new path and found himself face to

face with a great problem—but it is to his discredit that just then he deliberately closed both eyes.

A more logical pioneer of birth control was James Mill, the first of the neo-malthusians, who in an article on "Colony," in the Encyclopedia Britannica Supplement of 1818, wrote that the best means of checking the progress of population is the most important practical problem to which the wisdom of the politician and the moralist can be applied. He admitted that the question had always been "miserably evaded by all those who have meddled with the subject," and then proceeded to evade the subject himself, but not before warily hinting that "if the superstitions of the nursery were disregarded and the principle of utility kept steadily in view, a solution might not be very difficult to be found, and the means of drying up one of the most copious sources of human evil

might be seen to be neither doubtful nor difficult to be applied." In 1821, in the first edition of his "Elements of Political Economy," Mill again proclaimed that "the grand practical problem, therefore, is, to find the means of limiting the number of births."

In the following year, neo-malthusianism uttered its war-cry—the embattled phrase, prevention of conception. A treatise published in 1822, "Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population," contained these plain-spoken words:

> "If, above all, it were once clearly understood, that it was not disreputable for married persons to avail themselves of such precautionary means as would, without being injurious to health, or destructive to female delicacy, prevent conception, a sufficient check might at

once be given to the increase of population beyond the means of subsistence."

The author of this declaration was Francis Place. Born in a private debtor's prison, kept by his brutal and dissolute father; beaten and maltreated from his earliest years; apprenticed in a passion to a drunken maker of leather-breeches; cast upon the streets with criminals and prostitutes; redeemed at nineteen by his marriage to a helpmate of seventeen; thrown out of work by a strike and boycotted by employers; starved until the terror of poverty left an indelible mark upon him, Francis Place emerged upward, through life's quagmire, as one of the most useful men in England. His remarkable library was frequented by many important characters, and there were few social reforms in which Francis Place did not have a hand. As the "Radical Tailor of Charing

Cross," he drafted the People's Charter, and discomfited that prop of toryism, the Duke of Wellington.

His faithful pioneer-work for the limitation of offspring exposed him to life-long abuse: the Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge declined to receive any useful knowledge from Place; respectable people refused to be introduced to him, and even leaders of the laboring-classes spat venom at mention of his name. Yet his influence was extensive, the good he accomplished was incalculable, and his spirit of reform still animates our times. Not Malthus, but Francis Place is the real father of the Birth Control Movement.

A copy of Place's "Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population" entered prison, where it was read by Richard Carlile, who was more apt to be found in jail than at home. In his boyhood, Carlile had joined a mob in burning Tom

Paine in effigy, but when understanding came, he reprinted the writings of this great humanitarian. The government sought to discourage his publishing venture by prosecution, but instead of consulting his safety, the stout-hearted Carlile published similar books, until he earned six indictments. In the middle of the night he was handcuffed, and between two armed officers was driven to Dorchester Gaol, a distance of over a hundred miles. But the proceedings of his trial spread still further, and Emperor Alexander signed a ukase forbidding any report to be brought into Russia.

Carlile transformed Dorchester Gaol into Liberty's editorial sanctum, issuing twelve volumes of *The Republican.* From his prison-cell, this dauntless man fought for the freedom of the press. In connection with Richard Carlile, the British government showed itself both petty and ma-

lignant. His sister, Mary Anne, published his "New Year's Address to the Reformers of Great Britain," and was rewarded by a year's imprisonment. His shopmen were arrested so frequently that it became necessary to sell his books by clockwork: the customer turned the handle of a dial, and after depositing the correct amount of money, the desired volume dropped out. An attempt, headed by that arch-enemy of reform, the Duke of Wellington, was made to ruin Carlile completely, by seizing and destroying his book-store. Carlile's wife had little sympathy with his views, but she possessed a warm temper, and was so incensed at the government's unjust treatment of her husband, that she worked loyally for him, raising his book-business to a greater pitch of prosperity than the unpractical Carlile himself could have done. For her efforts in this line, she was compelled to

serve two years in prison. Only after the government ceased its persecutions of the champion of free press, did Carlile and his wife separate.

When Carlile first read Place's pamphlet, he determined to write an editorial in rebuttal of the new doctrine. He communicated with the author, and received frank advice. "I do not see," answered Place, "that you are called upon to take up the subject of Population in your publication. If you think you can do no service, refrain; if you think you can be useful, go on."

Strange to say, the opinionated Carlile heeded this advice. For the following three years he pondered over Francis Place's ideas, and his attitude changed from opposition to uncertainty, and finally from neutrality to fervent advocacy. Carlile's pen ever lay near his convictions, and his tract, "Every Woman's Book,"

describing methods of preventing conception, was the boldest neo-malthusian pronouncement that had yet appeared. It drew upon him the coarsest vituperation, but many editions were called for, and in summing up his unforgettable career for a free press, Richard Carlile of Dorchester Gaol placed these words on record:

> "After years of consideration, and three years of clamor against it, I now and forever stake my moral reputation upon the character of that book and will stand or fall with it in public opinion. I will endeavor to be otherwise useful; but I have no desire to be known to posterity in a higher character than that of being the sole and unassisted author of 'Every Woman's Book.' "

Among the young men who distributed "Every Woman's Book," and flung neo-

malthusian broad-sheets into the areas of houses, until the police interfered, was one destined to become illustrious—James Mill's son. Years later, John Stuart Mill erected a neo-malthusian landmark by the publication of his "Principles of Political Economy," asserting it was a crime for parents to bring more children into the world than they could properly support. Certain chapters contain unanswerable malthusianisms on every page; we select a few passages:

"Every one has a right to live. We will suppose this granted. But no one has a right to bring creatures into life to be supported by other people. Whoever means to stand upon the first of these rights must renounce all pretensions to the last. If a man cannot support even himself unless others help him, those others are entitled to say

that they do not also undertake the support of any offspring which it is physically possible for him to summon into the world. Yet there are abundance of writers and public speakers, including many of the most ostentatious pretensions to high feeling, whose views of life are so truly brutish that they see hardship in preventing paupers from breeding hereditary paupers in the workhouse itself. Posterity will one day ask with astonishment, what sort of people it could be among whom such preachers could find proselytes."

"When persons are once married, the idea, in this country, never seems to enter any one's mind that having or not having a family, or the number of which it shall consist, is amenable to their own control. One would imagine that children were rained down upon married

people direct from heaven, without their having either art or part in the matter; that it was really, as the common phrase has it, God's will, and not their own, which decided the number of their offspring."

"Only when, in addition to just institutions, the increase of mankind shall be under the deliberate guidance of a judicious foresight, can the conquests made from the powers of Nature by the intellect and energy of scientific discoverers become the common property of the species, and the means of improving and elevating the universal lot."

"It is seldom by the choice of the wife that families are too numerous; on her devolves (along with all the physical suffering and at least a full share of the privations) the whole of the domestic

drudgery resulting from the excess. To be relieved from it would be hailed as a blessing by multitudes of women, who now never venture to urge such a claim, but who would urge it if supported by the moral feelings of the community. Among the barbarisms which law and morals have not yet ceased to sanction is, that any human being should be permitted to consider himself as having a *right* to the person of another."

The purity of Mill's life, and his eminence as a thinker, could not save his grave from the mud-slinging of an Abraham Hayward—but through such slime all reformers must pass.

II

AMERICA'S FIRST CONTRIBUTION

I sit down to write a little treatise, which will subject me to abuse from the self-righteous, to misrepresentation from the hypocritical, and to reproach even from the honestly prejudiced. Some may refuse to read it; and many others will misconceive its tendency. I would have delayed its publication, had the choice been permitted me, until the public was better prepared to receive it: but the enemies of reform have already foisted the subject, in an odious form, on the public; and I have no choice left.

ROBERT DALE OWEN: *Moral Physiology.*

Robert Owen certainly received his share of vilification. Although he transformed the mill-people of New Lanarck from ignorant, drunken and vicious scum —whole families herding together in one

filthy room—into thrifty, clean and education-loving citizens, although he "originated and organized infant schools, secured a reduction of the hours of labor for women and children in factories, strove to promote international arbitration, and spent his life and a large fortune in seeking to improve his fellow men," he was viewed with suspicion because he was skeptical regarding theology. Moreover, there was another reason for distrusting Robert Owen: after witnessing hundreds and hundreds of children, five and six years of age, taken from poor-houses and charities and sentenced to long hours of drudgery in mills and factories, he cultivated the friendship of Francis Place. In the days when the so-called *Diabolical Handbill*—a neatly-printed circular describing methods of limiting progeny to the number desired—nearly set the Thames on fire, Robert Owen was flatly

accused of the authorship and was challenged to deny it, but he uttered no repudiation.

His New Harmony colony on the banks of the Wabash was one of those unsuccessful experiments which are more significant than successful ventures. In defeat, Robert Owen returned to Europe, but he left four valuable sons in America. The eldest, Robert Dale Owen, as a member of the Indiana legislature, procured for married women the right to control property and the right to their own earnings, and he injected as much rationalism into the divorce laws as his contemporaries would permit. He was the founder of the public-school system of Indiana, and when in Congress he became "the legislative father of the Smithsonian Institution," and accident made him the first American advocate of birth control.

A Brighton compositor, learning that

one of his friends was departing for America, placed some printed matter in his hand, and requested him to exhibit the specimens to the craftsmen abroad, as examples of English typography. These copies were presented to Robert Dale Owen, who was sufficiently public-spirited to feel that they should belong to a printers' society rather than to an individual, and accordingly mailed them to the Typographical Society of New York. Owen expected to hear no more of the matter, but his specimens were returned to him with a long letter of unrestrained insult, charging him with debauchery, and of "holding out inducements and facilities for the prostitution of our daughters, sisters and wives." Upon investigation, the surprised man discovered that these moral printers accused him of approving of Richard Carlile's "Every Woman's Book," and accordingly refused to accept

from his dishonored person any examples of ingenious typography.

This onslaught was directly responsible for the production of Owen's "Moral Physiology," in the preface of which he explained his position. "My principles," wrote Robert Dale Owen, "thus officiously and publicly attacked, I have felt it a duty to step forward and vindicate them; and this the rather, because, unless I give my own sentiments, I shall be understood as unqualifiedly endorsing Richard Carlile's. Now, no one admires more than I do the courage which induced that bold advocate of heresy to broach this important subject; and to him be the praise accorded, that he was the first to venture it. But the manner of his book I do not admire." Owen's "Moral Physiology" was published in New York in December, 1830, and within seven months the writer was called upon to prepare five editions,

and several further editions appeared in 1832.

The seemingly widespread belief that female chastity can be kept alive only by the fear of pregnancy was attacked by Owen in the following indignant and florid manner:

"Truly, but they pay their wives, their sisters, and their daughters, a poor compliment! Is, then, this vaunted chastity a mere thing of circumstance and occasion? Is there but the difference of opportunity between it and prostitution? Would their wives, their sisters, and their daughters, if once absolved from the fear of offspring, become prostitutes—sell their embraces for gold, and descend to a level with the most degraded? In truth, they slander their own kindred; they libel their own wives, sisters, and daughters. If they

spoke truth—if fear were indeed the only safeguard of their relatives' chastity, little value should I place on a virtue like that! and small would I esteem his offense, who should attempt or seduce it.

"That chastity which is worth preserving is not the chastity that owes its birth to fear and ignorance. If to enlighten a woman regarding a simple physiological fact will make her a prostitute, she must be especially predisposed to profligacy. But it is a libel on the sex. . . . For myself, I would withhold from no sister, or daughter, or wife of mine, any ascertained fact whatever. It should be to me a duty and pleasure to communicate to them all I knew myself; and I should hold it an insult to their understandings and their hearts to imagine, that their virtue would diminish as their knowledge in-

ROBERT DALE OWEN

creased. Would we but trust human nature, instead of continually suspecting it, and guarding it by bolts and bars, and thinking to make it very chaste by keeping it very ignorant, what a different world we should have of it! The virtue of ignorance is a sickly plant, ever exposed to the caterpillar of corruption, liable to be scorched and blasted even by the free light of heaven; of precarious growth; and even if at last artificially matured, of little or no real value . . .

"This book will make its way through the whole United States. Curiosity and the notoriety which has already been given to the subject will suffice at first to obtain for it circulation. The practical importance of the subject it treats will do the rest. It needed but some one to start the stone; its own momentum will suffice to carry it forward.

> "But, if we *could* prevent the circulation of truth, why *should* we? We are not afraid of it ourselves. No man thinks his morality will suffer by it. Each feels certain that his virtue can stand any degree of knowledge. And is it not the height of egregious presumption in each to imagine that his neighbor is so much weaker than himself, and requires a bandage which he can do without?"

"Moral Physiology" was the best-reasoned and most elaborate contribution to family limitation that had yet been written, and it delighted Francis Place, who sent copies to Harriet Martineau and to many other celebrities.

III

BRADLAUGH'S CHALLENGE

I may, therefore, state generally that this question is to me no new question; that for many years I have advocated this subject in public; that I have issued a journal declared to be Malthusian in its policy for nearly twenty years, and, as I told you before, Lord Amberley referred to it and to me in a speech which he made at a science assembly in 1868, and thanked me for having pressed this question upon the attention of the working-classes, and the same estimate of my labors in this direction has been left on record by that eminent thinker, John Stuart Mill. Gentlemen, I should have been disloyal to my views enunciated long ago, to my program in connection with the population question issued some twenty years ago, and thoroughly believed in by me ever since, if I had not defended this action.

BRADLAUGH: *Address to the Jury.*

The perusal of Owen's "Moral Physiology" induced a physician in Boston to

write a work along the same lines. Dr. Charles Knowlton's "Fruits of Philosophy," containing a practical chapter on checking conception, was published in 1833, and is interesting as being the first medical contribution to birth control. Carlile's friend, James Watson, introduced "Fruits of Philosophy" into England, where for forty years it circulated lazily along. By 1876, "Fruits of Philosophy" was almost antiquated, but Lord Campbell's Act was new, and it swooped down on Knowlton's brochure, denounced it as obscene, arrested a Bristol bookseller, and prosecuted the publisher. The frightened proprietor implored pardon, admitted he was guilty of obscenity, and promised never to offend again. The authorities imposed a light sentence, congratulating themselves upon an easy victory, but at this moment there leaped into the fray

one of the most romantic personalities of the nineteenth century.

Charles Bradlaugh was one of those men who are born in hovels but are destined to shake palaces. His father was a poor solicitor's clerk and his mother had been a nurse-maid, and Bradlaugh himself began his career as an office-boy. He was only a lad when he was labeled an atheist and discharged from employment, because he had fraternized with some of Richard Carlile's disciples. In his twenties he became editor of the *National Reformer,* and it was apparent that freedom had gained a vigorous defender. His open-air meetings provoked riots and clashes with the police, but when Charles Bradlaugh spoke, justice unbandaged her eyes.

Like all men who dedicate their lives to assailing current iniquities, Bradlaugh was accused of breaking every command-

ment in the decalog and of committing every crime in the calendar, and there were found human beings base enough to argue that Bradlaugh could not be libeled or slandered because he was a professed freethinker and republican. His unselfishness, his warm-hearted sincerity, his passion for progress and humanity, meant nothing to those who regard nonconformity as the unforgivable sin.

The summary suppression of Knowlton's pamphlet was a blow at free speech which naturally enlisted the sympathies of Bradlaugh, and aroused his combativeness. In partnership with young Annie Besant, he opened a publishing establishment at 28 Stonecutter Street, reprinted "Fruits of Philosophy," and mailed copies to the city police—with this defiant information: "Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant will attend at the above ad-

dress to-morrow, from four to five, to sell the enclosed pamphlet."

Thus arose, in the year 1877, the historic trial of Regina *v.* Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant. The indictment is worthy of preservation:

"The Jurors for our Lady the Queen, upon their oath present that Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant unlawfully and wickedly devising and contriving and intending, as much as in them lay, to vitiate and corrupt the morals as well of youth as of divers other liege subjects of our said Lady the Queen, and to incite and encourage the said liege subjects to indecent, obscene, unnatural, and immoral practices, and bring them to a state of wickedness, lewdness, and debauchery, therefore, to wit, on the 24th day of March,

1877, in the City of London, and within the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court, unlawfully, wickedly, knowingly, willfully, and designedly did print, publish, sell, and utter a certain indecent, lewd, filthy, and obscene libel, to wit, a certain indecent, lewd, filthy, bawdy, and obscene book, called 'Fruits of Philosophy,' thereby contaminating, vitiating, and corrupting the morals as well of youth as of other liege subjects of our said Lady the Queen, and bringing the said liege subjects to a state of wickedness, lewdness, debauchery, and immorality, in contempt of our said Lady the Queen and her laws, to the evil and pernicious example of all others in the like case offending, and against the peace of our said Lady the Queen, her crown, and dignity."

ANNIE BESANT

CHARLES BRADLAUGH

The Solicitor-General opened his prosecution with the vilest insinuations against the defendants, but upon being rebuked by the Lord Chief Justice, was obliged to content himself with the argument that it is "illegal to issue a work containing a chapter on restriction, not written in any learned language, but in plain English, in a facile form, and sold at sixpence." The proceedings aroused unprecedented interest, Bradlaugh and Annie Besant were repeatedly cheered as they walked from the court-room to their carriage, over two hundred thousand copies of Knowlton's booklet were sold within a few weeks, and in summing up, the Lord Chief Justice sadly declared:

> "A more ill-advised and more injudicious proceeding in the way of a prosecution was probably never brought into a court of justice. Here is a book

which has been published now for more than forty years, which appears never to have got into general circulation to any practical extent, and which by this injudicious proceeding has been resuscitated and sent into general circulation to the extent of thousands of copies.

"And when the learned Solicitor-General says that in consequence of the challenge sent forth by the defendants to the police authorities after the work had been given up at Bristol, that they were prepared to publish it and sell it with a view to challenge the question whether it was a work which might really be circulated, when the Solicitor-General says that left no alternative to the authorities but to meet that challenge, I must say that I do not agree with him; and when he talks of the authorities I should like to know who are the authorities and what are the author-

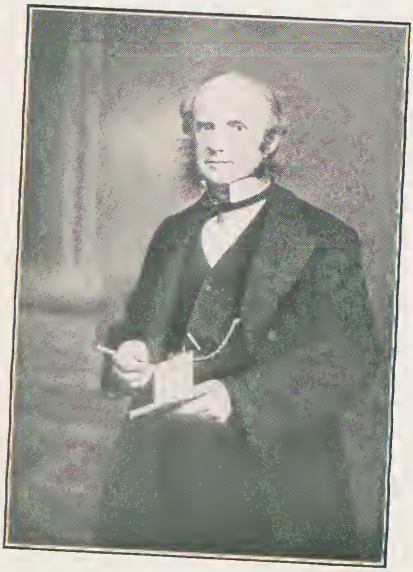
ities to whom he refers. He did not venture to tell us that anybody except the policeman who was put in the box on the part of the prosecution is, in fact, the prosecutor in this case. I should very much like to know who are the authorities who are prosecuting, because that has not yet transpired."

After an absence of an hour and thirty-five minutes, the jury returned and delivered this curious verdict:

"We are unanimously of opinion that the book in question is calculated to deprave public morals, but at the same time we entirely exonerate the defendants from any corrupt motives in publishing it."

The Lord Chief Justice explained that this was technically equivalent to a ver-

dict of guilty, yet he was disposed to leniency if submission was promised. But recantation was not in Bradlaugh's vocabulary, and when he and his co-defendant pledged fidelity to their principles, the Lord Chief Justice became impatient and imposed a severe sentence, which, however, was never served, for a higher court immediately discovered a technical error in the indictment, and Bradlaugh and Annie Besant were acquitted with acclaim—and thus ended the trial which Alexander Bain has pronounced "an epoch in the history of our liberties."



DR. CHARLES R. DRYSDALE

IV

THE MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE

Children have been without value in the world because there have been too many of them; they have been produced by a blind and helpless instinct, and have been allowed to die by the hundred thousand. For more than half a century after the era of social reform set in there was no decline at all in the enormous infant mortality. It has only now begun, as the inevitable accompaniment of the decline in the birth rate. Not the least service done by the fall in the birth rate has been to teach us the worth of our children. We possess the power, if we will, deliberately and consciously to create a new race, to mold the world of the future.

HAVELOCK ELLIS: *Race Regeneration.*

In the Bradlaugh-Besant edition of "Fruits of Philosophy" occur certain footnotes which were introduced for the fol-

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lowing reason: "Physiology," said the editors, "has made great strides during the last forty years, and, not considering it right to circulate erroneous physiology, we submitted the pamphlet to a doctor in whose accurate knowledge we have the fullest confidence, and who is widely known in all parts of the world as the author of 'Elements of Social Science'; the notes signed G. are written by this gentleman." The physician referred to was Dr. George Drysdale, who produced the large neo-malthusian work, "Elements of Social Science," at the age of twenty-eight, and spent the succeeding fifty years of his life in pushing its sales. He wrote anonymously in order not to offend his orthodox mother—but the name of Drysdale has since become indissolubly linked with the neo-malthusian propaganda.

During the Bradlaugh trial, another Drysdale raised his voice against the crim-

inal folly of uncontrolled breeding—Dr. Charles R. Drysdale. He was called as a medical witness, and when the Lord Chief Justice asked him whether there was anything prurient in the Knowlton essay, he replied: "Certainly not. It is an excellent little book. My professional life has been among hospitals for many years, and that has led me into contact with the poor of this city. I have been obliged to see what a miserable condition there is of squalor, utter distress, and indigence, even in the great metropolis of the empire. I have been continually obliged to lament the excessive rapidity with which the poorer classes bring unfortunate children into the world, who in consequence die, or grow up rickety and weak. . . . The death-rate is enormous where families are large among the poorer classes." This famous trial gave such impetus to the movement for the regula-

tion of the birth-rate that the Malthusian League was organized in London, under the presidency of Dr. Drysdale, who likewise became the first editor of the periodical of the league, *The Malthusian, A Crusade Against Poverty.* Dr. Drysdale was the author of "The Population Question According to Malthus and Mill," and he published a "Life of Malthus"—but a readable biography of Malthus has never been written.

The Malthusian League is now presided over by Dr. Alice Drysdale Vickery, who also won her neo-malthusian spurs in the celebrated Bradlaugh trial. At that time she held a certificate for midwifery of the Obstetrical Society of London, was a fourth-year student of l'Ecole de Médicine at Paris, and was the first woman who had passed the regular examination of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. After testifying at the trial,

DR. ALICE VICKERY DRYSDALE

Miss Alice Vickery and Dr. Charles R. Drysdale were married.

The present editor of *The Malthusian* is their son, Dr. Charles Vickery Drysdale, who has written extensively on the population question, among his works being "The Small Family System." Dr. Drysdale's writings carry no emotional appeal, but they contain diagrams; the author indulges, not in perorations, but in statistics; his is the eloquence, not of rhetoric, but of dry facts.

A few months after the conclusion of the Knowlton skirmish—when Annie Besant was celebrating the victory by writing the "Law of Population" which achieved an enormous sale—similar proceedings were commenced against Edward Truelove, a London bookseller who not only published and sold, but believed in liberal literature. In this case the offending treatise was nearly half a century

old—Robert Dale Owen's "Moral Physiology." A member of the jury eulogized the book, and Truelove was discharged, but Secretary Collette of the Society for the Suppression of Vice proved himself the British Anthony Comstock by his persistence in the persecution, and with such success that Truelove was compelled to pay a fine and serve four months in prison. The meeting of protest which filled St. James Hall, and the enthusiastic applause which answered the remonstrances of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, proved to the authorities that such prosecutions would not be popular in England.

Among the obscure but effective workers for the Malthusian League in its early days, were its ever-faithful secretary, W. H. Reynolds, who received an average of a thousand letters a month at a time when the League "could not even boast an office;" T. O. Bonser, the Oxford graduate

who would engage in lengthy walking-tours through the provinces, distributing great quantities of Malthusian leaflets; and George Standring, the brave printer, whose "Memories and Musings of an Old Malthusian" are now in process of publication.

In the eighties, Dr. Henry Arthur Allbutt, of Leeds, wrote the "Wife's Handbook," including a practical chapter on the prevention of pregnancy. He was soon stripped of his medical honors, the General Medical Council declaring that the low price at which the handbook was sold brought it within the reach of every one, to the detriment of public morals; had the doctor charged 6s. instead of 6d. for his pamphlet, he would have been permitted to retain his M. R. C. P. E.—but this was not the first time that the humble sixpence played a rôle in neo-malthusian history.

Darwin acknowledged that he was profoundly influenced by Malthusianism, Huxley clearly recognized the calamity of over-population among the poor, and Herbert Spencer has left us a splendid neo-malthusian slogan:

> "I detest that conception of social progress which presents as its aim increase of population, growth of wealth, spread of commerce. In the politico-economic ideal of human existence there is contemplated quantity only and not quality. Instead of an immense amount of life of low type I would far sooner see half the amount of life of a high type. Increase in the swarms of people whose existence is subordinated to material development is rather to be lamented than rejoiced over."

In England, the battle for birth control has virtually been won: within recent

HAVELOCK ELLIS

years, the Malthusian League has distributed, without official interference, thousands of leaflets to married people, describing methods of contraception. Many of the leading Englishmen of the day are impressed with the catastrophe of unchecked procreation. Among the vice-presidents of the Malthusian League are such distinguished names as Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, Eden Phillpotts, Joseph McCabe, and John M. Robertson. Great Britain's foremost sexual psychologist, Havelock Ellis, has written tellingly for birth control, and Bernard Shaw has summed up the propaganda in a characteristic epigram: "The artificial sterilization of matrimony is the most revolutionary discovery of the nineteenth century."

V

THE AMERICAN PROPAGANDISTS

Having thus started in on the trail of a waif, we shall follow it chapter by chapter from the womb to the tomb—from its birth in the lying-in ward of the hospital to the almshouse for the aged indigent, and then on to the potters' field; and by the time our chapters on this subject are completed we will be able to prove that the physician whose agencies can prevent conception stands at the head of the list of the great benefactors of humanity.

BRICK POMEROY: *New York Life.*

In America, after the appearance of the Owen and Knowlton pamphlets, there was a lull in the propaganda for about two generations, and the advocates who then arose were individuals of an obscure type, quite unknown outside of their

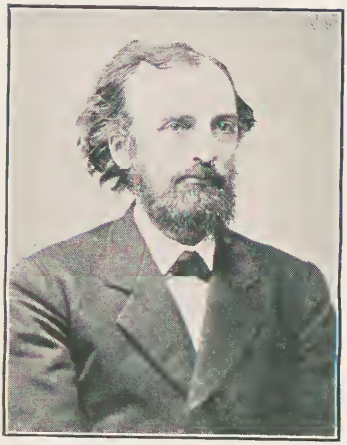
own small circles; men and women who were so radical on most subjects that they were practically outcasts of society; their revolutionary writings were published in such propaganda-sheets as *Lucifer* and the *Firebrand,* but their names never appeared in the newspapers—except when they were arrested. To this group belonged Brick Pomeroy, Ezra H. Heywood, Moses Harman, D. M. Bennett, Abner Pope, Jay Fox, Edwin C. Walker, Abe Isaak, Mattie Sawyer, Moses Hull, Isabel Beecher Hooker, and the Tilton sisters. These rebels were not primarily neo-malthusians; they were sex reformers, and were interested in voluntary motherhood merely as one aspect of sex reform.

Yet no one wrote more forcibly for contraception than Brick Pomeroy in his "Pen Pictures of New York Life," and in 1882, when the hand of the law fell on

Ezra Heywood for the second time, the charge was not only that he tried to teach physiology to the young, but that he supplied information as to "how, where, from whom, and by what means a certain article, designed and intended for the prevention of conception, might be obtained and had." The proceedings were interspersed with various humorous incidents, but the convict's solemn and impassioned eloquence reached the heights of genuine oratory, and earned its place in the anthology of persecution. Turning to the jury, Ezra Heywood spoke:

> "Sad indeed is it that hitherto Liberty has come mainly through martyrdom; that 'by the light of burning heretics' we track the bleeding feet of Progress—civilization advancing from prison to prison, from gibbet to gibbet, from stake to stake. . . .

MOSES HARMAN



EZRA HEYWOOD

"The adverse verdict, five years ago, ruined my business, broke up my home, turned my family penniless on the street, took my liberty and well-nigh my life; caged in tomb 52 of Dedham Hell, with clipped head and in felon's uniform, my physical vitality slowly but irrevocably breaking under the torturing rigors of even a liberal jail—as the days, weeks, months wore heavily on, and sympathetic, indignant, throbbing hearts in many States echoed my protest, these precious children in their temporary, charitably-provided home, again and again asked, 'Mamma, why does papa not come home? Why does papa not come home?' Gentlemen, shall I go home? . . .

"If with your aid your agent again slave-pens me in a prison-vault to wait and waste away, in my narrow home of iron and granite until the rude corpse-

box bears back this body-form to my bereaved family, even then the ultimate result will be worth to the world all it costs me and mine; weak things will confound the mighty; others and still others with increasing, invincible numbers will rise in my tracks, and the good fight of faith will go on, until freedom to acquire and impart knowledge on all subjects of human interest, the right to have, print, and *mail* honest opinions, is assured wherever the federal union flag floats."

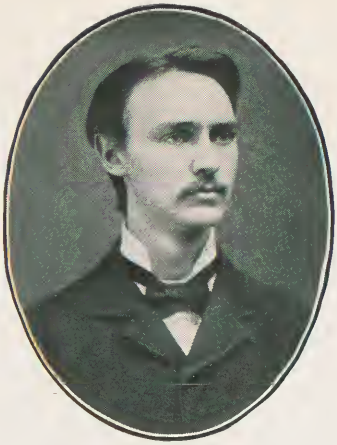
Associated with this group, was a medical man who issued to applicants, contraceptive methods in pearl-type, but although pearl is smaller than agate, it did not escape the vigilant eye of Anthony Comstock. This was one of the censor's earliest heresy-hunts, but his double-barreled weapon was loaded with hypocrisy

and puritanism, with the result that Dr. Edward Bliss Foote was mulcted of five thousand dollars for having sent his "Words of Pearl" through the United States Post-Office. Dr. Foote was a physician, but an irregular: he was a member of the eclectic sect, and he never read the code of ethics of the A. M. A., and the same is true of his son, Dr. Edward Bond Foote, the founder of the Free Speech League, who in 1886 published a splendid essay on "Borning Better Babies."

Somewhat outside the main current of neo-malthusian literature, and marred by its fanatical faith in prenatal influence, was the work on "Ædœology," published in the nineties by Sydney Barrington Elliot, a Boston physician. But the book carried as its motto, "It is the right of every child to be well born," and Dr. Elliot devoted over thirty pages to the limitation of offspring. "If parents," he

wrote, "cannot have this power of selection, they cannot have well-born children. For there must be a deliberate, not a chance, haphazard conception; procreation, to yield the best results, must be controlled." Dr. Elliot was about to supply a chapter on preventive methods, but to his deep chagrin found that it was "unlawful to publish any matter on this subject." His book was a factor in the formation of one of our earliest birth-control leagues, the National Scientific Family Culture Institute, among its founders being James F. Morton, Jr.

Another propagandist was the man whose life was a battle against prejudice, beneath whose eyelids fell the tears that quenched the flames of Calvin's hell, and set the star of mercy there instead—Robert G. Ingersoll. In his birth-control message he said:



DR. E. B. FOOTE, JR.

DR. E. B. FOOTE, SR.

"For thousands of years men and women have been trying to reform the world. Why have the reformers failed? I will tell you why.

"Ignorance, poverty and vice are populating the world. The gutter is the nursery. People unable even to support themselves fill the tenements, the huts and hovels with children. They depend on the Lord, on luck and charity. They are not intelligent enough to think about consequences or to feel responsibility. At the same time they do not want children, because a child is a curse, a curse to them and to itself. The babe is not welcome because it is a burden. Against this inundation of vice the forces of reform are helpless, and charity itself becomes an unconscious promoter of crime. . . .

"There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty and vice must stop populating

the world. This cannot be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. This cannot be done by religion or by law, by priest or by hangman. This cannot be done by force, physical or moral.

"To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress of herself. Science, the only possible savior of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother.

"This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are then born will be welcome. They will be clasped with glad hands to happy breasts. They will fill homes with light and joy."

VI

PROGRESS IN THE PROFESSIONS

There is no single measure that would so positively and so immediately contribute toward the happiness and progress of the human race as teaching the people the proper means of regulating reproduction.

Dr. William J. Robinson.

The regular physicians of New York seemed to be unanimously and officially opposed to any discussion of the limitation of offspring, and the profession had no spokesman for birth control until 1904, when a graduate of the medical department of New York University, William J. Robinson, entered the lists with a pen that struck like a lance. He has worked

persistently for the abrogation of the laws which prevent information on birth-rate regulation from reaching the masses, and he has been the most prolific contributor to the literature of the subject. Agitation and argumentation, however, have not modified the laws, and a few years ago, when Dr. Robinson published the first edition of his "Limitation of Offspring," he was forced by the censorship to leave blank the chapter he had written on the modern methods of preventing conception.

But these blank pages, though there is no printed matter on them, are not empty —they contain an eloquent protest against a tyranny that is daily growing more galling and intolerable. From perhaps every state in the Union have come hundreds and hundreds of letters, from the people and from the profession, begging for the missing information. If they were all pub-

lished, they would make enormous volumes of frantic appeals. In our Birth Control editorial in the *Medical Review of Reviews* of 1916, we quoted fifteen of these letters—a few grains from a desert of sighs.

Locked in the doctor's drawer, the information waits—and outside, the people wait. The exhausted poor, with their swarms of ill-kept and perishing babies, wait; the consumptive waits, and the epileptic waits; the mother who is becoming a chronic invalid from too-frequent childbearing, waits; the young man of moderate means who would be glad to marry if he could regulate the number of his children, waits; the accidental parents of unwelcome offspring, wait; the husband who is a wreck from coitus interruptus, waits; the woman who aborts whenever she is impregnated, waits; the woman to whom pregnancy spells the grave, waits.

But not only the poor and the maimed wait. The cultured woman, in comfortable circumstances, is no longer willing to be an unintelligent breeding-machine, turning out descendants at random. It is not for officious meddlers, but for the man and woman themselves, to decide when they are ready to assume the responsibilities of parenthood. Millions wait, but they stretch forth their hands in vain, for Section 211 of the United States Penal Code is in their way: for distributing information on this subject, the punishment is five years in prison, or amercement of five thousand dollars, or both.

Who will repeal this barbarous law?—a law which the legislators themselves privately violate. Where is the strong and righteous arm that will strike down this vicious taboo? To develop a prophylaxis against pneumonia would be glorious, and to discover the preventive of cancer

would certainly be magnificent, but the man who will succeed in giving the waiting people the scientific methods of regulating their offspring, will be one of the greatest benefactors that the human race has ever known. This should be a task for the medical profession, for the prevention of undesired pregnancy is a phase of preventive medicine, and if obscurantism were not so well-intrenched we would soon see the fulfillment of Dr. Robinson's prophecy:

> "There will come a time—and it is not far off—when the prevention of undesired pregnancy will be as proper, as respectable and as much the function of the medical practitioner as is now the prevention of typhoid, diphtheria or tuberculosis."

Unfortunately, official medicine is seldom cognizant of sociology; conservatism

is naturally expected of physicians, and in relation to neo-malthusianism the profession has shown itself more ignorant and reactionary than even the judiciary. Whoever is rash enough to broach this problem at a medical meeting is likely to stir up a bottomless pit of medieval prejudice, and through the indignant denunciation will hear prevenception branded as abortion, or the outcry of an O'Brien that birth control means onanism.

Our doctors, therefore, were somewhat stunned in the summer of 1912, when their beloved dean, the much-venerated Abraham Jacobi, in his presidential address before the American Medical Association, stood on the unorthodox side and advocated the necessity of disseminating to the public the best methods of controlling undesired and undesirable fecundation—the grand old man thus showing himself more advanced than many of his younger

DR. A. JACOBI

colleagues. Dr. Jacobi's position in the profession rendered him relatively immune to insults, and it required three years and an Austin O'Malley to cast the first stone. "It seems," wrote Dr. O'Malley, "that Dr. Abraham Jacobi has become careless in his associations and has joined this estimable galaxy whose cult is the lonely cradle. As every one knows, he used to be a very useful physician. He was imprisoned for high treason against the government of Germany in 1851, and he is a revolutionist against the government of God in 1915."

As the father of pediatrics in America, Jacobi became famous as a lover of children, and it was eminently fitting for this man to have crowned his career as the champion of better-born babies. In the press, and at birth-control meetings held in such diverse places as the New York Academy of Medicine and the Free Syn-

agogue Pulpit, the leading physician of America preached the gospel of genuine race-salvation. A. Jacobi was a generous admirer of his adopted land; he criticized nothing that was American—except the Comstock laws. Concerning the American Inquisition, he wrote:

"I often hear that an American family has had ten children, but only three or four survived. Before the former succumbed they were a source of expense, poverty, and morbidity to the few survivors. For the interest of the latter and the health of the community at large, they had better not have been born. . . .

"The question whether a family may be large or ought to be small, will be asked again and again. There is only one country in which that question is regarded with hypocritical sneers, and

that country is ours; there is only one country in which a man and woman must not think of framing their own future, and constructing their fate and that of their born or unborn children—that is the 'land of the free.'

"It is my opinion that the individual and collective habits in this regard should not be guided by other than voluntary self-determination. Indeed as long as the state is founded on the family, the man and the woman must not and cannot be interfered with by anything but their own will. Parental responsibility alone must control the numerical strength of a family; the prevention of excessive offspring is a central problem of both individual and social hygiene. . . .

"Both our federal and state laws on the subject of prevention are grievously wrong and unjust. It is important

that these laws be repealed at the earliest possible moment; it is important that useful teaching be not crippled, that personal freedom be not interfered with, that the independence of married couples be protected, that families be safeguarded in regard to health and comfort, and that the future children of the nation be prepared for competent citizenship."

In the autumn of 1915, the *Medical Review of Reviews,* under the direction of Frederic H. Robinson, initiated its campaign for birth control with a bold experiment; the magazine selected several men from the bottom strata of life, gave each a banner to carry, and directed them to parade in the crowded districts of the city. The banners which these human wrecks held aloft did not bear the inspir-

ing device, Excelsior, but these large-lettered warnings:

I am a burden to myself and the State. Should I be allowed to propagate?

I have no opportunity to educate or feed my children. They may become criminals.

Would the prisons and asylums be filled if my kind had no children?

I cannot read this sign. By what right have I children?

Are you willing to have me bring children into the world?

I must drink alcohol to sustain life. Shall I transfer the craving to others?

Thus was the question of birth control placed in the path of society. The author-

ities and the man on the street could dodge the issue no longer—it walked right into their midst, and the newspapers and the Mutual Movies featured these living arguments against reckless breeding.

Among other medical protests against unrestricted procreation, the articles of S. Adolphus Knopf are notable for their statistics and cogency. As professor of phthisiotherapy in the New York post-graduate school of medicine, and as one of the most distinguished enemies of the tubercle bacillus, Dr. Knopf is qualified to emphasize the relationship between tuberculosis and birth control. The O'Briens and O'Malleys have not yet deprived Knopf of his standing, although he is a professed law-breaker: "I do not know," admits Professor Knopf, "the penalty to be visited upon a physician who offends the majesty of the law as set forth in Section 1142 of the New York penal code,

but I for one am willing to take the responsibility before the law and before my God for every time I have counseled, and every time I shall counsel in the future, the prevention of a tuberculous conception, with a view to preserving the life of the mother, increasing her chances of recovery, and last, but not least, preventing the procreation of a tuberculous race."

If more physicians would inject the elements of humanitarianism into their therapeutics, and remember the despair of many households which found themselves doomed to pass through another pregnancy, birth control would have more defenders among the M.D.'s. A. L. Goldwater's gynecological experience has been a ceaseless argument for the necessity of preventive breeding. His first confinement in a shoemaker's cellar on Monroe Street, where poverty and the few children that survived from a numerous prog-

eny jostled each other helplessly, was a grim tragedy that might have been written by a Malthusian Gorky in his darkest mood.

Dr. Goldwater was not one of the majority of the New York County Medical Society who voted against birth control in 1917. He was one of the minority who vainly attempted to keep the Society from voting itself down as purblind to the most important problem that ever engaged its attention. Ten years hence that Majority Report will be held up to universal derision and will read like satire. Márital self-control has been preached for many years and by many prevaricators, but Dr. Goldwater exposes the hypocrisy of this contention by neatly asking, "Will these persons claim that sexual relations should be exercised less often, let us say, than once a year? And if they would permit even that amount of intercourse, what is

to prevent a woman from having a dozen children in as many years?"

But the Cause goes on, in spite of Majority Reports, and into long-darkened sanctums the light is slowly breaking. A long list of physicians could now be compiled who recognize the necessity of regulating fertilization. Under the heading of Birth Control, the *Quarterly Cumulative Index,* published by the American Medical Association, indexes the medical articles on the subject—and the very existence of medical articles on the subject is evidence of progress. Moreover, birth control is now on the medical map, for there is a brief but sympathetic reference to it in the second edition of Dr. Fielding H. Garrison's standard "History of Medicine."

Just as the medical profession has its O'Briens, so the legal profession has its McInerneys who itch to throttle every ex-

pression favorable to family limitation. Yet although many married judges with small families have possessed sufficient effrontery to imprison birth control advocates, it is an error to assume that the judiciary has arrayed itself in solid opposition to the neo-malthusian movement. During the Bradlaugh trial, the Lord Chief Justice of England, Alexander Cockburn, was sympathetic enough—indeed, he called the theory of Malthus "an irrefragable truth,"—but the surprise came from Australia. In 1888, Annie Besant's "Law of Population" was being prosecuted in New South Wales, and the senior puisne judge of the supreme court, W. C. Windeyer, instead of indulging in the usual invective against the sixpence menace, rendered a judgment which was such splendid propaganda-material that Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant reprinted it in pamphlet form. The charac-

ter of Justice Windeyer's verdict may be sensed from these lines:

> "Having carefully read the 'Law of Population,' it appears to me to be written with all decent sobriety of language. I see nothing in its language which an earnest-minded man or woman of pure life and morals might not use to one of his own sex, if explaining to him or her what was necessary in order to understand the methods suggested by which married people could prevent the number of their children increasing beyond their means of supporting them. . . .
>
> "Information cannot be pure, chaste, and legal in morocco at a guinea, but impure, obscene, and indictable in a paper pamphlet at sixpence. The information, to be of value in a national point of view as a safeguard from the

miseries of over-population and overcrowding, must be given wholesale to the masses likely to overbreed. The time is past when knowledge can be kept as the exclusive privilege of any caste or class."

The United States has similarly enlightened judicial officers, among them being Judge J. C. Ruppenthal, of Kansas. Judge William N. Gatens, of Oregon, Judge Ben B. Lindsey, of Denver, and Judge John Stelk, of Chicago, are members of the National Council of the Voluntary Parenthood League. When a husband and wife, with nine children which they were unable to support, were brought before Judge Charles A. Dudley, of Iowa, the judge frankly advised this couple to acquaint themselves with birth control methods, and added, "Theodore Roosevelt, with his anti-race suicide talk,

has done more harm to this country than any other living man."

But the Windeyer of America is William Henderson Wadhams, of New York. In the Court of General Sessions, a woman who was the mother of six children pleaded guilty, for the second time, to a charge of burglary. Illness had driven the father from his work in the garment trade, and the mother had tried hard to support the family, but without success, while pregnancy followed pregnancy. After his investigation, Judge Wadhams was too human to send this victim to prison; he suspended sentence in words that should have burnt a certain portion of our statute-book to ashes:

> "Her husband is not permitted by the authorities to work because of his being ill with tuberculosis. It would be dangerous for him to work on chil-

dren's garments. It might spread consumption to the innocents. There is a law against that. As a result of this law the husband has had no work for four years. Nevertheless, he goes on producing children who have very little chance under the conditions to be anything but tubercular, and themselves growing up, repeat the process with society. There is no law against that.

"But we have not only no birth regulation in such cases, but if information is given with respect to birth regulation, people are brought to the bar of justice for it. There is a law they violate. The question is whether we have the most intelligent law on this subject we might have. These matters are regulated better in some of the old countries, particularly in Holland, than they are in this country. I believe we are living in an age of ignorance, which

at some future time will be looked on aghast."

In spite of pedagogic traditions, the neo-malthusian doctrines have penetrated academic circles—perhaps because professional salaries are meager—and from the foremost chairs in the country have come pronunciamentos for prevenception. Beginning with the great Lester F. Ward, who wrote most forcibly for the doctrine in his "Dynamic Sociology," a host of professors have added to the bibliography of birth control. Warner Fite, the peripatetic who has taught philosophy and ethics in the leading universities of the north and south and east and west, has contributed a pro-essay on "Birth Control and Biological Ethics." Clifton F. Hodge, when professor of biology at Clark University, declared that the first right that must be granted woman, in the name of a

higher and better-born humanity, is the absolute control of her own person; that she alone can feel when her delicate organism is ready for this supreme call of life, and that any interference with these impulses and instincts must come to be recognized as an unbiologic crime. Scott Nearing, who was promoted from the universities of Pennsylvania and Toledo to the Rand School, has demonstrated effectively, in various publications, the menace of overpopulation. James Alfred Field, who has given instruction in political economy at Radcliffe and the University of Chicago, has devoted himself to the early historical phases of the movement. Thomas Nixon Carver, the professor of political economy at Harvard, may not have written copiously on the pressure of population, but he has gained neo-malthusian immortality by one unforgettable paragraph:

"Foxes think large families among the rabbits highly commendable. Employers who want large supplies of cheap labor, priests who want large numbers of parishioners, military leaders who want plenty of cheap food for gunpowder, and politicians who want plenty of voters, all agree in commending large families and rapid multiplication among the poorer classes."

VII

WOMAN'S SHARE

Let us insist upon Birth Control now—even in the face of statutes, magistrates, courts and jails. The rebel spirit is of great social value; it keeps the race from becoming craven.

JESSIE ASHLEY.

When woman first claimed admission to the privileges of higher education, men pointed out that a female who studied in botany that plants had sex-organs, would be unfit to associate with their respectable sisters. When she knocked at the gates of medicine, men declared that a woman who could listen to a lecture in anatomy was unworthy of honorable wifehood. When she asked for chloroform to assuage the pangs of childbirth, men quick-

ly informed her that if women bear their children without pain, they will be unable to love them. When the married woman demanded the right to own property, men swore that such a radical step would totally annihilate woman's influence, explode a volcano under the foundations of family union, and destroy the true felicity of wedded life, and they assured us they opposed the change, not because they loved justice less, but because they loved woman more. During the many years that woman fought for citizenship, men gathered in gambling-dives and bar-rooms and sadly commiserated each other on the fact that woman was breaking up the home. Now woman demands the control of her own body, and there are men who reply that if women learn how to prevent pregnancy, they will abolish maternity. It seems there are always some men who are haunted by the fear that women

are planning the extinction of the race. To attempt to reason with such men is folly, and we can only hope that a general knowledge of contraceptive methods, judiciously applied, will eliminate this type.

Among the women of America who have labored as missionaries in this field, should be named Jessie Ashley, Rose Pastor Stokes, Mary Ware Dennett, Anita C. Block, Clara G. Stillman, Mary Knoblauch, Lurana Sheldon—and, of course, there are many others. In various ways they have preached that voluntary motherhood is sacred, but to thrust undesired maternity upon an unwilling woman is an insult and a crime; that the thoughtless breeding of unwanted offspring must give way to children who are conceived in love and brought forth in desire; that fewer babies will then be born, but more will survive; that under birth control it will

be impossible to raise large armies for slaughter, but the army of human fellowship will increase; that birth regulation does not spell race-suicide, but race-salvation.

After all, the average individual is blessed with a fortunate disposition: he has no quarrel with the constituted authorities. He accepts the dominant theology, applauds the elected politicians, believes the newspapers, upholds the present economic system, and in spite of his sufferings, defends Things-As-They-Are, hurling anathemas at the torch-bearer who would lead him out of captivity. All through the ages, the lovers of humanity have been in prison-cells, while the betrayers of humanity have sat in high office. Within recent years, the central figure in birth-control agitation has been a trained nurse—Margaret Sanger. Ever since she announced in the first article of the first

issue of her first magazine, "It will be the aim of the *Woman Rebel* to advocate the prevention of conception and to impart such knowledge in the columns of this paper," she has held high the torch that Place and Knowlton and Bradlaugh lit, and in her hands it has blazed anew. Her pamphlet, "Family Limitation," brought much-needed information into thousands of homes, but our censor pronounced it "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, indecent and disgusting," and Mrs. Sanger found it expedient to interpose an ocean between herself and Mr. Comstock. She studied the birth control methods which are permitted in Europe, especially in Holland where dozens of free birth control clinics are operated under government sanction, with the natural result that Holland has become the earth's Utopia.

Balked of his prey, Anthony Comstock descended to methods which were emi-

nently contemptible, but characteristically Comstockian. One of his agents, under an assumed name, called on Mrs. Sanger's husband, and posing as his wife's friend, begged for a copy of the forbidden pamphlet. Now William Sanger is an artist, not a propagandist; he had not collaborated in any of his wife's writings, and did not even know where a copy of the pamphlet was. But his visitor pleaded, and the unsuspicious husband asked him to wait, and after rummaging through the belongings of his exiled wife, he found several copies, and presented one to the spy who had invaded his home.

Mr. Sanger thought no further of the incident until he was arrested by Anthony Comstock, and found himself in court, attempting to enlighten a survival of the tenth century, named Judge McInerney. At the trial, William Sanger was magnificent. From his opening statement,

"I admit that I broke the law, and yet I claim that, in every real sense, it is the law, and not I, that is on trial to-day," until his last defiant cry, "I will never pay that fine. I would rather be in jail with my conviction than be free at a loss of my manhood and my self-respect. This court can't intimidate me," before the attendants hustled him to the Tombs, William Sanger proved himself noble and unafraid.

In the meantime, Mrs. Sanger returned from abroad, armed with a document which she had secured largely through the instrumentality of Dr. Marie C. Stopes, signed by a group of notable British authors and sociologists. The letter was addressed to the president of the United States:

"We understand that Mrs. Margaret Sanger is in danger of criminal prose-

cution for circulating a pamphlet on birth-problems. We therefore beg to draw your attention to the fact that such work as that of Mrs. Sanger receives appreciation and circulation in every civilized country except the United States of America, where it is still counted as a criminal offense.

"We, in England, passed a generation ago, through the phase of prohibiting the expressions of serious and disinterested opinion on a subject of such grave importance to humanity, and in our view to suppress any such treatment of vital subjects is detrimental to human progress."

Coiled between these mildly-worded lines lay concealed a powerful rebuke, for in every department of sexology America is the most backward of nations. The Malthusian League of England, whose

practical leaflet, "Hygienic Methods of Family Limitation," has fallen like a benediction over many lands, announces in italics, its "inability to comply with applications for this leaflet from the United States,"—for it is not permitted to enter a country which has sufficiently forgotten its Declaration of Independence to become enslaved by Comstockery. Margaret Sanger was not warmly welcomed by the authorities, but the public interest in her was so intense that the persecutors delayed the case; again a date was set for the trial, and again it was postponed; for the third time Mrs. Sanger appeared, but there was further procrastination, and then unexpectedly, on the eve of Washington's birthday, the case was suddenly dismissed—and the propagandist's subsequent journey, from coast to coast, was a triumphal tour.

The authorities were ready to quit, but

Mrs. Sanger had just begun to fight. On the sixteenth of October, 1916, she made history. Aided by her sister, Nurse Ethel Byrne, and two social workers, Fania Mindell, and Elizabeth Stuyvesant, she opened the first birth-control clinic in America. In the midst of Brownsville, she implanted Holland. At number 46 Amboy Street, she built an altar to Voluntary Motherhood.

In the crisp autumn morning, Margaret Sanger opened the doors, and the wrecked mothers flocked in, with their overworked bodies and pitiful tales, with their monotonous tragedies and ruined lives, with their sickly broods and ghosts of buried children and abortions, begging for the knowledge which would save them from chronic pregnancy. In that snow-white clinic-room, the spirit of rebellion flamed high—even against the Infallible Church. Elizabeth Stuyvesant asked a

little Catholic woman what she would say to the priest when he learnt that she had been to the clinic, and she answered indignantly, "It's none of his business. My husband has a weak heart and works only four days a week. That's twelve dollars, and we can barely live on it now. We have enough children." Then her friend, a woman of thirty-six who looked like sixty, chimed in: "When I was married, the priest told us to have lots of children and we listened to him. I had fifteen. Six are living. Nine funerals in our house."

When Margaret Sanger opened the door of her birth-control clinic, she opened the way to a better-born humanity. Within ten days a policeman's club blotted out the social vision, and the light-bringers were headed for prison. Mrs. Bryne found herself confronted by a Commissioner of Correction who cynically resolved to break her spirit; but he was no

match for this frail woman protesting against injustice. In the workhouse, Ethel Byrne refused to work or eat or drink, and after a hunger-strike of eleven days, when that unconquerable soul lay at the verge of death, the embarrassed governor of New York was forced to pardon her—although she had served only one-third of her allotted sentence.

After her release, Margaret Sanger founded the *Birth Control Review,* "dedicated to the principle of intelligent and voluntary motherhood." The American Government's indictment of Margaret Sanger can never equal Margaret Sanger's indictment of the American Government:

> "The hundreds of thousands of abortions being performed in America each year are a disgrace to civilization. I lay the blame for them and the illness,

suffering and death resulting from them at the door of a government which in its puritanical blindness insists upon suffering and death from ignorance rather than life and happiness through knowledge and prevention."

In a world where hypocrites rule, every Cause must pass through a prison. Among others who have suffered for their efforts to spread among the people the most important of all knowledge—a boon that would wipe out the fountain-source of abortion, prostitution and venereal disease—are Dr. Ben Reitman and Emma Goldman, the latter of whom stepped from her prison-cell to the platform of Carnegie Hall to address a great birth-control mass-meeting—and the immense audience which filled that huge hall from the orchestra to the back row of the top-most tier, cheering every bold word for

birth control, was another scene in the drama of the awakened people. The young editor of *The Flame,* Van Kleeck Allison, received atrocious treatment from a Catholic judge in Boston, but from his persecution was born the Birth Control League of Massachusetts. In the unending annals that recount the struggle of mankind for freedom and progress, history will reserve a bright page for the Pioneers of Birth Control.

Not easily is an Inquisition overthrown and before America emerges from the shadow, more pioneers will be "honored by the touch of the jailer's hands," but through the stone walls and across the iron bars their spirits shall stand on the hilltops, and looking downward they will see the people, in ever-increasing numbers, climbing upward toward the new land and the better day.

APPENDIX

LANDMARKS IN BIRTH CONTROL

1798—Publication of Malthus, "Principles of Population."

1803—Second and revised edition of Malthus' essay.

1818—James Mill's *Colony* article in "Encyclopedia Britannica."

1821—First Edition of James Mill's "Elements of Political Economy."

1822—Francis Place advocates prevention of conception in marriage.

1823—Methods of preventing conception described in "Diabolical Handbill."

1826—Publication of Richard Carlile's "Every Woman's Book."

1830—Robert Dale Owen's "Moral Physiology" published in New York.

1833—Dr. Charles Knowlton's "Fruits of Philosophy" published in Boston.

1848—John Stuart Mill's "Principles of Political Economy."

1854—Dr. George Drysdale's "Elements of So-

cial Science" published by Edward Truelove.

1873—Dr. Edward Bliss Foote prosecuted under Comstock Laws.

1877—The Queen versus Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant.

—Malthusian League organized, and *The Malthusian* established.

1878—Edward Truelove imprisoned for selling Owen's "Moral Physiology."

—Publication of Annie Besant's "Law of Population."

1880—W. H. Reynolds becomes secretary of the Malthusian League.

1882—Trial of Ezra Heywood at Boston.

1883—Lester F. Ward advocates birth control in "Dynamic Sociology."

1886—Dr. Edward Bond Foote's "Borning Better Babies" published in New York.

1887—Dr. H. Arthur Allbutt's "Wife's Handbook" published in London.

1892—Dr. Charles R. Drysdale's "Population Question According to Malthus and Mill."

1893—Dr. Sydney Barrington Elliot's "Ædœology" published in Boston.

1894—"Life of Bradlaugh," by Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner.

1898—Publication of Graham Wallas' "Life of Francis Place."

APPENDIX

1904—Dr. William J. Robinson opens medical campaign for birth control.

1911—Havelock Ellis writes tract on "Race Regeneration."

1912—President of British Medical Association, Sir James Barr, endorses birth control.

—President of American Medical Association, Dr. A. Jacobi, endorses birth control.

1913—First edition of Dr. Charles V. Drysdale's "Small Family System."

1914—Activity of Margaret Sanger.

1915—William Sanger trapped and arrested.

—Birth control articles in *The Survey*.

—National Birth Control League Organized.

—Birth Control meeting at New York Academy of Medicine.

1916—Trial of Emma Goldman in New York, and of Van Kleeck Allison in Boston.

—Mass-meeting in Carnegie Hall.

—Margaret Sanger's birth control clinic in Brooklyn.

—Activity in Ohio, under leadership of Frederick A. Blossom.

1917—Ethel Byrne's hunger-strike.

—Dr. Morris H. Kahn describes "A Municipal Birth Control Clinic."

—Eden and Cedar Paul's symposium on "Population and Birth Control."

1919—Voluntary Parenthood League organized.

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